DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 037 408 SP 003 702

TITLE	Beyond Desegregation: The Problem of Power. A Special Study in East Texas.
INSTITUTION	National Education Association, Washington, D.C. Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities.
PUB DATE	Feb 70
NOTE	56p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (Free)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Black Power, Change Agents, *Civil Rights, *Community Attitudes, Educational Problems, *Integration Studies, Negro Teachers, Power Structure, *Racial Discrimination, Teacher Associations

ABSTRACT

This document presents the results of an authorized study of reported school desegregation problems in East Texas. It is designed to be of value to any school district in which desegregation is being planned or implemented. The field studies which provided the basis for the report were conducted in three phases: (1) the preliminary staff inquiry, (2) field study by the members of a special committee, and (3) visits to selected school districts and interviews with local association officers in East Texas. In its four-chapter report, the committee (1) describes and relates to the problems under study the geographic, historical, and current socioeconomic environment in which these problems have developed; (2) summarizes its findings, which fully substantiated the allegations that school desegregation, as it is being implemented in many parts of East Texas, is resulting in the arbitrary and discriminatory treatment of black students and teachers; (3) analyzes the environment of school districts and communities that stifles and blocks resolution of the grievances of those who are being victimized by the misapplication of, or noncompliance with, desegregation laws and guidelines; (4) suggests a course of organized action by which teachers can help to remedy the serious situation that now exists. (JES)

In prolonged controversies, where concerned parties often lose their ability to explore alternatives, to understand and communicate, and to view their own position and that of their adversaries without bias, deadlock or impasse sometimes occurs. In this type of situation, a third party can be useful in mediating or investigating the dispute and suggesting possible remedies. Since the time the National Education Association was chartered by Congress in 1906, the Association has received numerous requests from teachers and from the public that it lend assistance in matters of controversy that are amenable to settlement through the processes of investigation or fact-finding.

To help carry out the investigation function, the National Education Association in 1941 organized the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education. In 1961, the Representative Assembly merged the Commission with the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom, to form the national Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities. The functions of this Commission are-

1. To defend members of the teaching profession, schools, and the cause of education against unjust attacks; to investigate controversies involving teachers and schools justly, fearlessly, and in the public interest

2. To encourage the development and use of personnel policies that attract and hold competent professional personnel and prevent unnecessary difficulties

3. To aid in improvement and extension of state tenure legislation

4. To protect the rights of members of the teaching profession and foster conditions of academic freedom under which teachers may safely teach the truth without fear or favor

5. To gather information about the various individuals and groups who criticize or oppose education, and make resumes of their activities

6. To investigate cases of alleged unethical conduct by members of the teaching profession and report to the Committee on Professional Ethics

7. To investigate charges and report to the NEA Executive Committee the name of any member who violates the membership requirements as stipulated in Article I, Section 1 of the NEA Bylaws

8. To issue reports and engage in such other activities as are appropriate to the development of better understanding by the profession and the public of the areas of concern which are the responsibility of the Commission.

Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities

of the

National Education Association of the United States
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
Stock No. 165-05046

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A SPECIAL STUDY
IN EAST TEXAS

ED037408

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Beyond Desegregation: The Problem of Power

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SP003702

Published by the
National Education Association
Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C 20036

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE EAST TEXAS STUDY

Mr. Alphonse Jackson, *Chairman*	Elementary School Principal Shreveport, Louisiana; President, Louisiana Education Association
Mr. S. M. Dickerson	Classroom Teacher Nashville, Tennessee; President, Metropolitan Nashville Education Association
Miss Helen Hay	Classroom Teacher Denver, Colorado; Vice-Chairman NEA-PR&R Commission
Mrs. Ruby McCoy	Classroom Teacher Little Rock, Arkansas; President Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

PR&R Staff Assistants

Mr. Dale A. Robinson, *Coordinator*	Associate Secretary for Field Studies
Mrs. Dorothy C. Massie	Assistant Secretary for Field Studies
Mrs. Janet Pansing Lendino	Information Specialist

Mr. George B. Mears, Department of Sociology, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas, served as Special Adviser on the sociology and history of East Texas.

Foreword

The NEA PR&R Commission conducts studies such as this one of East Texas to identify and focus attention on the problems affecting education and educators in certain regions and to propose steps to improve the situation. Those who are a part of the society of a given region often lack the perspective necessary to recognize injustices, particularly if they are not victims themselves. The function of this report is to assist all concerned in recognizing the need for change and to suggest means of bringing about such changes. Inability to recognize injustices because of life-long involvement and acceptance is no excuse for inaction in seeking to remedy them.

East Texas is not unique. Other regions have similar practices and attitudes which result in the denial of equal education to minorities—Black, Spanish American, Indian, Puerto Rican. But the existence of parallel conditions elsewhere in no way excuses or condones their continuation in East Texas.

Change in a social order is never easy. Yet difficulty is no justification for failure to make whatever changes are needed to make reality conform to the promises of our Declaration of Independence. Both minority and majority groups have vital roles in this change.

Let no one outside East Texas read this report without reflection on his own community and the degree of equality of education available to all students in their home town.

NICHOLAS E. DUFF, *Chairman*
Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities
National Education Association

1. Introduction

In 1965, a Task Force of the National Education Association (NEA) surveyed the problem of teacher displacement as a serious and spreading side effect of school desegregation in 17 Southern and Border states. The Task Force found that—

> One of the ironies of school desegregation has been that those school systems giving earliest and most complete compliance to the Supreme Court's [school desegregation] decision are likely also to be the systems where marked displacement of Negro teachers takes place. This has been true especially of the rural and small-city systems of the Border states.[1]

It was in Texas—a beacon state in desegregation—that the Task Force found the highest number of reported instances of teacher displacement attributed directly to school desegregation.* In Deep South states, the displacement of black educators was a growing problem, but this was often due to their participation in civil rights activities (such as voter registration drives) rather than to desegregation of schools.

During the years since 1965, school desegregation has proceeded—albeit haltingly and with varying degrees of gradualism—throughout all Southern states; and desegregation in many districts has meant the elimination of black principals and the dismissal or demotion of black teachers.

As reflected in Resolutions of its Delegate Assembly, the National Education Association is deeply concerned about the violation of the professional and civil rights of educators—black and white—wherever such violations occur. This concern is manifested in various concrete ways: through financial aid to educators seeking redress of just grievances through the courts, through continuing assistance to state affiliates in working for improved teacher tenure laws, and through continuing assistance to affiliated associations in working to achieve professional

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* Another state, Florida, had the largest number of teacher displacement cases, and although many of these may have been indirectly the result of school desegregation practices, the immediate cause was found to be the manner in which the state used National Teacher Examination test scores as criteria for promotion and placement on tenure status.

negotiation agreements with local boards of education, which will incorporate equitable and orderly means of grievance resolution. The NEA Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities (PR&R Commission) has worked with local and state affiliates to strengthen their own PR&R units, and it has investigated and publicly reported cases of teacher rights violation throughout the United States in the belief that the exposure of injustice, with realistic proposals for organized corrective action, can have ameliorative effect. It was in this spirit that the NEA-PR&R Commission authorized a study of reported school desegregation problems in East Texas.

REPORTS OF DESEGREGATION RESULTS IN EAST TEXAS

During the latter part of 1967, the PR&R Commission received several reports of alleged flagrant discrimination and bypassing of legally established desegregation procedures by local East Texas boards of education.

The usual pattern of desegregation (in Texas and in other states) has been one-way—the transfer, through freedom-of-choice or administrative order, of black students into formerly all-white schools. In those districts adopting desegregation plans involving the mass transfer of students, there has been a pattern of closure or gradual "phasing out" of the all-black schools.

Reports from East Texas during 1968 indicated that the problems of desegregation had not diminished—rather they had increased—since the NEA Task Force Survey of 1965. It was claimed that the one-way desegregation process was resulting in the demotion and dismissal of qualified black teachers of long seniority and their replacement by less experienced, sometimes uncertificated white teachers, who were assigned to the desegregated schools. Black principals, allegedly, were being removed altogether from their school systems; they were being demoted; or in some instances they were given a paper promotion to a position in the central administration with greatly reduced authority, responsibility, and visibility.

Further, it was reported that transferred black students were being placed in segregated classrooms in "desegregated" schools and that they were being victimized by discriminatory treatment on the part of their white teachers and classmates.

In those instances where black teachers were actually transferred along with students to formerly all-white schools, there was much criticism of the method by which these transferred teachers were selected.

A nine-page letter, written by a Texas principal whose own position was adversely affected by the methods of desegregation in his district, served to focus the attention of the PR&R Commission on the major areas of concern. This principal asserted that, although the citizens in his area had no doubts about the good that could come from school desegregation, they did have many questions and complaints about *how* desegregation was being handled. Portions of the letter outlined bitter areas of strife:

When pupils, teachers, parents, and principal . . . are caught completely off-guard [by the desegregation decision] in the middle of summer, while going our separate ways, without knowledge of impending radical change, like all normal human beings we react negatively to such sudden, unexpected, unprepared for change; a decision for change that we played no part in reaching, not even remotely. We react negatively even though the objectives of such change are worthwhile and indeed desirable.

Since the overwhelmingly white student body [at the receiving school] was not prepared, psychologically (or otherwise) for the reception of Negro students who will comprise nearly 40% of the total enrollment, can one reasonably expect that racial friction will be kept to a minimum? Should racial harmony prevail, the credit will certainly be due to the good sense of the young people themselves rather than to the adults charged with the responsibility and paid to provide them with leadership in terms of a planned and orderly transition.

Neither the Superintendent [nor other school officials] has ever visited the classrooms of any of the teachers to be transferred. What criteria did they use in selecting the teachers to be transferred? . . . Why wasn't the [black high school] principal involved in the selection process . . . since it has been his responsibility to assign, evaluate, supervise, and rate these teachers?

. . . In the absence of any planned efforts from the Central Administration to prepare the teachers [of both the black and white high schools] for the transition, can they reasonably be expected to work together as a professional team . . ?

I have been informed that some of the transferred Negro teachers have been assigned teaching duties in their minor and weakest fields of professional preparation. . . . They cannot help but wonder if they are deliberately being goaded into resigning.

I have received the . . . information that the Negro teachers who are being transferred to the predominantly white . . . high school . . . will teach Negro pupils in the desegregated (?) senior high schools. Thus it appears that while both black and white pupils and teachers will be in the same building, they will in fact be segregated.

STAFF FACT-FINDING EFFORTS

It is the policy of the NEA-PR&R Commission not to undertake a formal investigation of a district or area without a request for such service from an identified complainant or complainants. The principal, from whose letter excerpts are quoted above, resigned from his position and did not file such a request on his own behalf. The Commission staff then attempted to contact other individuals from East Texas on whose behalf complaints had been registered with the NEA. Several months of staff fact finding revealed, however, that most of these educators had already resigned or had been dismissed from their districts. The fact finding also revealed continuing widespread dissatisfaction on the part of black educators still employed in East Texas districts. From several of these educators, and from parents and students as well, came requests for an NEA study of the problems of desegregation in East Texas. Due to their expressed fear of reprisal, the requesting individuals

asked that their identities not be divulged by the PR&R Commission, its staff, or any committee that it might appoint to conduct such a study.

AUTHORIZATION OF PRELIMINARY INQUIRY

Earlier studies by the Commission and case investigations by the DuShane Emergency Fund for Teacher Rights had revealed the swiftly growing magnitude of the teacher displacement problem in desegregating school districts of Southern and Border states. The unrelieved nature and widespread geographic dimension of this problem, as reported from East Texas, persuaded the Commission that a detailed study of the results of desegregation in selected East Texas districts might be appropriate. Such a study, the Commission believed, might produce information of value in the development of remedial measures that would be applicable, not only to the area of study, but to localities throughout the South where neither desegregation nor displacement has yet occurred to any great extent, but where the prospects of both are imminent. Therefore, at its October 1968 meeting, the PR&R Commission directed that a preliminary inquiry be conducted in East Texas to determine whether a full-scale study in this region would, in fact, be an advisable course of action.

Accordingly, a preliminary staff inquiry was held in East Texas on December 26-30, 1968. The findings of this inquiry confirmed the reports that the rights of black teachers and students were being violated through discriminatory treatment and through defective personnel practices in desegregating school districts in East Texas. The preliminary inquiry report recommended that a full-scale study be conducted.

CLASS II SPECIAL STUDY AUTHORIZED

On the basis of the preliminary inquiry report, the PR&R Commission, at its meeting of February 1969, directed that—

> A Special Study be conducted in selected districts in East Texas. The area of inquiry will be directed towards school desegregation with respect to the effects of desegregation resulting from the application of HEW Guidelines or court orders upon the students, teachers, and communities involved in the Special Study.

FEATURES OF A SPECIAL STUDY

The Special Committee appointed to conduct the East Texas study was directed to work within the bounds set by the three criteria which describe the Special Study and distinguish it from the Commission's Class I investigation. These criteria are:

> A. The report issued as a result of a Class II special study shall not have a punitive or derogatory effect on identifiable person(s), agencies, or organizations.

B. The matter studied must be relevant to the purposes of the NEA and the Commission.

C. The matter should not be one that could be dealt with better or more appropriately by another NEA unit or affiliate organization.

The intent of the Special Committee, therefore, was not to attribute blame for the East Texas difficulties, but rather to study the nature of the problems with a view to proposing realistic courses of corrective action.

STUDY PROCEDURES

The field studies which provided the basis for this report were conducted in three phases: (1) the preliminary staff inquiry, (2) field study by the members of the Special Committee, and (3) visits to selected school districts and interviews with local association officers in East Texas.

The initial on-site study by the Special Committee was conducted from March 27 through March 31, 1969. The school districts included in the study were selected with the intent of providing a cross-section representation of the various sizes of school systems and types of desegregation plans—both court-ordered plans and plans accepted by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) through its Civil Rights Compliance Division.

From the outset of the study, it was evident that the feelings of insecurity of black educators and lay citizens were so intense that it would be difficult to identify persons who would meet with the Special Committee and staff. It was necessary to give assurances of anonymity to prospective witnesses before they would venture to the scene where the Special Committee took testimony. The final phase of the on-site study was conducted in June 1969, when PR&R staff assistants to the Committee interviewed selected school administrators and association leaders in East Texas.

SCOPE OF REPORT

In this report, the NEA Special Committee—

- Describes and relates to the problems under study the geographic, historical, and current socioeconomic environment in which these problems have developed.

- Summarizes its findings, which fully substantiated the allegations that school desegregation, as it is being implemented in many parts of East Texas, is resulting in the arbitrary and discriminatory treatment of black students and teachers.

- Analyzes the environment of school districts and communities that stifles and blocks resolution of the grievances of those who are being victimized by the misapplication of, or noncompliance with, desegregation laws and guidelines.

- Suggests a course of organized action by which teachers can help to remedy the serious situation that now exists.

It is the Special Committee's intent that this report reach persons in other districts where desegregation is now being planned or implemented, so that its findings and proposals may help them to avoid, prevent, or by organized effort prevail against the discriminatory practices that in East Texas have so distorted the meaning and purpose of the Supreme Court decision of 1954 and subsequent desegregation laws and standards.

2. Background

THE LOCALE OF THIS STUDY

That part of Texas defined as "East Texas" contains approximately one-fourth of the total land and more than one-half of the total population of the state. Geographically, East Texas encompasses an area lying generally east of a line drawn from Dallas to Houston.

The focal areas of this study are those counties located in the north and central eastern portions of East Texas. Excluded from the study are the cities of Dallas and Houston. These two large cities, although located in the eastern part of the state, are by tradition and culture substantially removed and remote from that area in which the problems central to the study have occurred.

The East Texas of this study is the region through which most of the early Anglo-American colonists, coming from Southern states, entered Texas and the westward movement. It is the Black Belt* of Texas, with Negroes comprising approximately 30 percent of the total population. These East Texas counties are primarily a rural area; geographically and culturally, they are a direct extension of the Old South.

"THE APPALACHIA OF TEXAS"

Within the Southern plantation economy, the wealth of a few people, privileged by birth and the caste of whiteness, was based on the labor of many people who were poor and propertyless. As the Southern system spread westward during the early nineteenth century, it carried with it this same strain of privilege and oppression. Although there is great land wealth in East Texas (including oil-producing areas, centers of important agricultural production, and more than half of the state's total forest area), the majority of the people in many of its counties remain poor and propertyless. In 12 of the 25 counties under study, the median family

* "Black Belt" originally referred to the blackness of the Southern cotton country soil; but it has also been commonly used to denote the high concentrations of black population in the cotton country localities.

income in 1960 was below $3,000, compared with a median income level of $4,884 for the state as a whole. In only four of these East Texas counties (Gregg, Bowie, Morris, and Smith) was the median family income as high as $4,000 in 1960.[2]

The impoverishment of large segments of the Texas population is not, of course, confined only to the eastern part of the state or to these 25 counties; nor are the blacks the only minority group in Texas to suffer from poverty and discrimination. Throughout Texas, approximately 800,000 families (29 percent of the total population) live below the federally defined poverty level of $3,000 per year. Many of these are Anglo-Americans. In South Texas, the most severely impoverished people are Spanish-American. In East Texas, while poverty is not confined to blacks, the majority of blacks are poor.

In Nacogdoches County, for example, a 1969 study by the Department of Education of Stephen F. Austin State University indicates that 55 percent of the population of that county fall below the poverty level. According to U.S. Census Reports of 1960, the population of Nacogdoches County was 28,846. Twenty-six percent of the population is black, which would indicate that in this East Texas county to be white offers no promise of affluence.

In Sabine County, with a population in 1960 of 5,404 whites and 1,892 blacks, an elected county official reported in 1969, "Our major source of income is welfare payments and Social Security benefits." (The median family income of Sabine County in 1960 was $2,517; 60.9 percent of its families had incomes of less than $3,000 a year.)

A State Department of Public Welfare caseworker reported to the Committee, "My area of service includes five East Texas counties and this area can most appropriately be called the Appalachia of Texas."

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Geographically and climatically, the entirety of East Texas provides a favorable setting for industrial, technological, and commercial development. But in these counties, such development has been virtually nonexistent; instead there has been slow but continuous population decline and, for most of the remaining population, economic stagnation.

It would appear that the major barrier to the economic advancement of these rural areas is attitudinal rather than physical. For decades and until the most recent years there has been a tendency on the part of East Texans to keep big industry out of the area. The East Texas businessman and landowner has traditionally taken the attitude that "Big industry means labor unions . . . and labor unions mean trouble."

And by way of further explanation, there is the general attitude of the majority of the people of East Texas. Even though they are Texans by birth, most East Texans are far removed, by history, tradition, and social values, from the stereotypic "Tall Texan" with his oil wells, cattle ranches, and range-riding fame. The

East Texans are a different breed—a cloistered people, no less, and fiercely independent in their isolation.

They are descendants of those who left the South with the westward movement in the 1830's and 1840's, but did not venture to the western frontier. Despite their travel they remained in Southern terrain and settled for Southern ways. Even after slavery was ended and other forms of economic activity, such as oil and lumber production, were interspersed with the early plantation agriculture, the social and political structure of the area remained rooted in the master-serf relationship of white to black.

Noted Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb, in a speech to Texas educators in 1959, said, "West Texas belongs to the American West, and East Texas belongs to the Old South. . . . The houses reflect that fact; the accents of the people indicate it, and the old families with their aristocratic traditions and presumptions, offer ample proof that this is a little corner of the Old South."

The late Dr. Webb described the agony of the South—and of East Texas—in its recovery from the Civil War and in its reluctance to face subsequent social change, including the massive change initiated by the Supreme Court school desegregation decision of 1954:

> Since about 1840 the South has been nourishing a negative attitude, much concerned with seeing that something was not done. It has not spent enough time studying what could be done, what might be done to the benefit of the region. It has since 1865 looked back nostalgically to what it considered the good old days, the days of dominance and glory. It has nourished its resentment of what happened following the Civil War when the South was exploited with a cruelty . . . that left a bitterness which has not even yet passed away. As a result of the Civil War and what followed, the South did not keep pace with the economic development of the nation. Poverty became almost the common lot and that poverty showed its ugly head in all the affairs of men, in bad health, in inadequate education, in soil depletion and human deterioration. No wonder the South looked back on a better time, no wonder it took a negative attitude toward what was happening, when everything happening was detrimental to it. No wonder it romanticized the past and built an unreal halo around the leisurely life of an older age. The South was sick. The sick man of the nation, the sick region, and its dreams were largely induced by the fever of poverty. Its sensitivity was that of the proud and the poor. This is a dark picture, but no darker than the reality which it represents.

Dr. Webb was correct in characterizing the East Texan as a product of the Old South. Research indicates, however, that the early settlers of East Texas were not the dominating Southerners, the large plantation owners. East Texans of the present day are, for the most part, descendants of those who did not make it in the South—those who looked toward the "Big House" from their hard-scrabble dirt farms and who left the South to make it on their own. As one East Texan put it:

> These people in the 1830's and 1840's . . . had heard that there was a land in Texas where they could make it. A few did; unfortunately, most did not and have accepted

> poverty as a way of life. And the only persons left to kick, the only scapegoat they have is the black. And they will fight for their right to kick the black. And that is why my son will enter an all-white school next year.

It is ironic that the poor whites who left the Old South, having been exploited by its feudal economy (the very nature of which predestines the profit of a few built on the labor of many), preserved this same economy and continued to be exploited by it in East Texas.

POLITICAL BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Although the Black Belt of Texas—centered largely in the counties under study—is not nearly so solidly black as that of the Deep South states, it has produced, as in the Deep South, a political system that continues to be largely dominated by one party. The frequent split between liberal and conservative factions of the Democratic Party has produced strange inconsistencies in the popular vote—not only in East Texas, but throughout the state. It is difficult, for example, to classify politically a people who will go to the polls during a general election and elect a John Dowdy to his sixth term in Congress and at the same time elect a Ralph Yarborough as Senator. Dowdy, according to some measures, has the most conservative voting record in Congress, while Yarborough has been described as one of the most liberal members of the Senate. An East Texan, voting for these two persons at the same election, will explain his contradictory choices by saying, "Well, they're both Democrats and that's enough for me."

It appears that in Texas, as in other predominantly one-party states, the absence of a strong outgroup to challenge the political philosophy and record of the party in power has tended to safeguard the status quo. Political party factionalism has led to a politics of personality rather than of issues. Even when there have been ideological clashes between the candidates of the one party, as noted above, the popular vote often has not reflected a general awareness of these differences.

And although the Republican Party is emerging as a growing political power in Texas—particularly in national elections—its appeal is not to those who would challenge the racial and political attitudes and the economic power groups that molded, and now preserve, the East Texas way of life.

Thus, the most outgroup of all the East Texans—the black citizenry—bereft of economic power and political choice, have little opportunity to effect change in either the circumstances of their own lives or of their society, except by leaving East Texas. As the experience of black immigrants to the nation's cities has shown, their exodus from the rural South has often meant little more than the exchange of rural poverty for urban poverty. And urban poverty, in many ways, may be even more brutally destructive.

Although the means of effecting change do not seem apparent now, there are many in this part of the South who are possessed of a growing determination that

change will come about. David Nevin, a Texan himself, in his recent book, *Texans: What They Are and Why*, stated:

> . . . change is coming on Texas now. The peons—Latins and Negroes—are rising. They are part of the world-wide rise of the brown-skinned peoples and there seems no question of their future. When they have completed that thrust, Texas will be the better, for their peonage and the arrogance of enforced class distinctions are one of the state's greatest failures.[3]

SUMMATION

How does one describe in summary the place called East Texas? This distinct geographic and cultural entity appears differently, depending upon one's perspective.

To the historian, East Texas is the area that was most solidly in support of the secession of Texas from the Union during the Civil War; it was the western edge of the Old South, with its institution of slavery supporting the cotton plantation economy that produced the first great wealth of Texas. To the conservationist, it is an area from which millions of feet of lush pine trees were voraciously ripped from the earth by lumber barons. To the sociologist, it is a place where the values and behavior patterns of Southern traditionalism are applied in reaction to modern-day problems. To the economist it is an area very rich in timber and oil and at the same time very poor, a region dotted with near ghost-towns—once thriving centers for railroads carrying cotton, slaves, or lumber. To federal officials gathering statistics on numbers of racially desegregated schools, it is *a showplace of forward thrust and progress.* To many residents, it is the homeland, admittedly different from the rest of the state, which they love and cherish. But to some of its citizens, East Texas is a way of life dominated by the myth of white racial superiority and the reality of black oppression; dissent against prevailing social attitudes can be expressed only by leaving.

To the Special Committee that conducted this study, East Texas appears as an arena for the contest between the diehard defenders of another myth—the doctrine of "separate but equal"—and the proponents of racially desegregated schools. In East Texas, one finds that the judicial removal of "separate but equal" is being accomplished. Desegregation, moving forward under the law and ostensibly in compliance with HEW Guidelines, is a statistical fact. Such physical movement of human beings, however, fails to achieve the equality which is the stated purpose of the federal desegregation laws and guidelines. Instead, racial inequality and injustice continue.

The NEA Special Committee focused its attention on this incongruity. The Committee set about to determine the factors that, directly or indirectly, result in the continuance of educational inequality in the midst of outstanding *statistical* progress in school desegregation. And the Committee explored, within the area of its study, the potential forces for constructive change.

3. The Legal Framework of Desegregation

In its decision of May 17, 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education,* the Supreme Court declared that "segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal [deprives] the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities," and so denies them the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the federal Constitution.

One year later, in the second *Brown* decision, the Court recognized "the complexities arising from the transition to a system of public education freed of racial discrimination," but required school districts to move "with all deliberate speed" toward full compliance with the 1954 ruling.

Since the mid-fifties, a series of Supreme Court and lower court rulings has been handed down to clarify and enforce the intent of the *Brown* decision. There has been an unprecedented volume of civil rights legislation, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act which, under Title VI, provided for a cut-off of federal funds to districts that persisted in operating segregated systems of education. The federal Executive Branch has issued directives, through its Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, offering guidelines for voluntary compliance with federal desegregation laws. Under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, various programs of technical assistance have been made available to local districts seeking aid in devising educationally sound and equitable desegregation plans.

A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

During the earlier post-*Brown* years, the emphasis in desegregation controversies was placed on determining what kinds of desegregation plans or systems would be sufficient to convince the courts of the good faith efforts of school officials in making "a prompt and reasonable start" toward the elimination of dual school systems. More recently, however, it became evident that many of the judicially and administratively approved desegregation plans were not, in fact, producing an acceptable rate of desegregation. For example, the "freedom-of-choice" plan of school desegregation, although theoretically sound, in actual practice failed to

provide a free choice (to frequently pressured and intimidated black students and parents) or any substantial degree of desegregation.

The courts then increasingly turned their attention to the *results* of desegregation programs and to a determination of whether the programs, as they were being implemented, were likely to produce full compliance with the *Brown* case principles in the near future. This shift of judicial focus was clearly articulated in April 1967 by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in the second *Jefferson County* (Alabama) case opinion:

> Officials administering public schools . . . have the affirmative duty under the Fourteenth Amendment to bring about an integrated, unitary school system in which there are no Negro schools and no white schools—just schools. Expressions in our earlier opinions distinguishing between integration and desegregation must yield to this afirmative duty, we now recognize. In fulfilling this duty, it is not enough for school authorities to offer Negro children the opportunity to attend formerly all-white schools. *The necessity of overcoming the effects of the dual school system . . . requires integration of faculties, facilities, and activities* as well as students.[4] [Italics added.]

A major implication of the *Jefferson County* decision was that it placed the judicial stamp of approval on the desegregation standards set forth by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in its *Policies on Elementary and Secondary School Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (HEW Guidelines). The Fifth Circuit judges had, in fact, quoted almost verbatim some of the language of the Guidelines, which stipulate—

> Compliance with the law requires integration of faculties, facilities, and activities, as well as students so that there are no Negro or other minority group schools and no white schools—just schools.

Another significant step toward requiring full compliance with the *intent* of the *Brown* decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Law was taken by the Supreme Court in May 1968, when it defined "the thrust of *Brown* II" in light of current circumstances:

> The transition to a unitary, nonracial system of public education was and is the ultimate end to be brought about. . . . School boards . . . operating state-compelled dual systems were . . . clearly charged with the affirmative duty to take whatever steps might be necessary to convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination would be eliminated root and branch.[5]

"The burden on a school board today," the Supreme Court declared, "is to come forward with a plan that promises realistically to work, and promises realistically to work *now*."

Most recently—in October 1969—the Supreme Court declared that desegregation with "all deliberate speed" is no longer constitutionally acceptable, and has ordered the *immediate* end of dual schools throughout the South.

In the abovenamed and in other rulings, the federal courts have stated clearly that it is not enough for school officials of formerly dual school systems simply to proclaim a policy of desegregation; that it is not enough for school officials simply to proclaim a policy of nondiscrimination in treatment of staff (which many of them have yet to do); and that it is not enough for school officials simply to open the doors of white schools to permit a few black students to enter under "freedom-of-choice."

In specific language, the courts have spelled out the terms of compliance with federal desegregation laws and with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment:

> The right of Negro students to be free from racial discrimination, in the form of a segregated faculty, is a part of the broader right to equal educational opportunity.
>
> Nondiscriminatory allocation of faculty is indispensible to the validation of a desegregation plan.
>
> In any instance where . . . professional staff members are to be displaced as a result of desegregation, no staff vacancy in the school system shall be filled through recruitment from outside the system unless no such displaced staff member is qualified to fill the vacancy. [*United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, 372 F. 2d 836 (5th Cir. 1966), *aff'd en banc*, 380 F. 2d 385 (1967), *cert. denied* 389 U.S. 840 (1967)]

> It is now firmly established in this circuit . . . that reduction in the number of students and faculty in a previous all-Negro school will not alone justify the discharge or failure to reemploy Negro teachers in a school system [and] that teachers displaced from formerly racially homogeneous schools must be judged by definite objective standards with all other teachers in the system for continued reemployment.
>
> A teacher wrongfully discharged or denied reemployment . . . is in addition to equitable remedies, entitled to an award of actual damage. [*Wall v. Stanley County Board of Education*, 387 F. 2d 275 (4th Cir. 1967)]

The HEW Guidelines are also explicit in this regard:

> School systems are responsible for recruiting, hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting and dismissing their professional staff without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. Where there has been discrimination in professional staffing policies or practices, school systems are responsible for taking whatever positive action may be necessary to correct the effects of the discrimination.
>
> If, as a result of a program for complying with Title VI, there is to be a reduction in the total professional staff of a school system, or professional staff members are to receive assignments of lower status or pay, the staff members to be released or demoted must be selected from all the school system's professional staff members without regard to race, color, or national origin . . . in such a situation, no staff vacancy may be filled through recruitment from outside the system unless school officials first determine that none of the displaced staff members is qualified to fill the vacancy.

The Guidelines, along with the courts, further stipulate that the provision of equal educational opportunity in compliance with law requires far more than the

placement or acceptance of black students in formerly white schools or of white students in formerly black schools; it requires that no student be excluded, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, from any program or activity of the school system.

> This responsibility for eliminating segregation extends to the manner in which a school system's educational programs and activities (including transportation, athletics, and extra-curricular activities) are organized, school construction is planned, and students are assigned to schools.

CONTROLLING PRINCIPLES OF DESEGREGATION

The above survey suggests certain controlling principles which one or more of the courts, together with HEW, have applied in determining whether the various desegregation methods do, in fact, "promise realistically to work." Among the controlling principles are the following:

- Racial discrimination in the selection, assignment, advancement, and retention of public school teachers and professional staff members violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

- The desegregation of faculty and professional staff is an essential part of any program to correct racial segregation in a public school system.

- The provision of equal educational opportunity requires not only the desegregation of schools and classrooms, but the desegregation of all programs and activities of the school system and the elimination of all racially discriminatory treatment of all students.

- Local school officials are legally obligated to take affirmative, accelerated action to end discriminatory practices affecting faculty and staff.

Accordingly, these are the criteria that the NEA Special Committee used in its evaluation of the desegregation practices of East Texas school districts. The following analysis will deal not with the extent of desegregation or with the types of desegregation plans in use, but with the manner in which these plans are being implemented. The Committee's primary concern in this study is with the *results* of desegregation as they have directly affected the central participants in the educational process—the students and the educators—and as they are ultimately affecting the broader public interest of ensuring equality of educational opportunity for all students.

4. The Results of Desegregation

"All the Teachers Are White Now"

Although the standards of desegregation are being articulated with increasing precision in a growing body of judicial law, the problems of desegregation continue to victimize those who have always been victimized. For every new court ruling designed to ensure the constitutional rights of students and teachers, countering evasive techniques are developed. As the process of desegregation moves forward, the absolute number and the percentage of black professionals working in the school systems dwindle. The closer a district moves toward so-called "full compliance,"* the fewer are the black educators in that district.

As noted earlier, the displacement of black teachers and principals as a painful side effect of desegregation is by no means unique to East Texas; nor is it a new phenomenon in East Texas or elsewhere in Southern and Border states—particularly in the rural and small town districts. It would have been news if the NEA Special Committee had found, during its study, even one single school district where there was any significant amount of faculty desegregation, where the desegregation process had been accomplished equitably and without the release or demotion of black teachers, or where a black principal had been appointed to the principalship of any school with as much as 10 percent white student enrollment.

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* Several East Texas districts have had federal funds cut off due to noncompliance with Title VI provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A major source of federal aid to education are the monies appropriated under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964, *specifically earmarked for the support of compensatory and enrichment programs for children of low-income families. It is these same children who are most often the victims of federal fund withdrawal.*

The Audit Agency of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has found that many school districts, *in direct contradiction to the provisions of the Act*, have used Title I monies to *supplant*, rather than to *supplement*, state and local financing of education in low-income areas. Thus, the withdrawal of Title I funds may result in the discontinuance of special compensatory projects, such as teacher aides, remedial programs, preschool programs, etc., or, it may have the even more serious result of depriving poor white and black students of *basic educational programs and services* which should have been financed (and are being financed in the middle-income area schools) by state and local allocations. So far, there has been no significant federal action against the misuse of Title I monies. It was not within the authority of this Committee to investigate the extent of such misuse in East Texas; the Committee is aware, however, that this is a problem urgently in need of remedial action—one which, although not confined to the South alone, is most serious in the South.

But the Committee found no such district; instead its findings revealed the continuance of the trend described by the NEA Task Force on Teacher Displacement in 1965:

> . . . 'white schools' are viewed as having no place for Negro teachers. As a result, when Negro pupils in any number transfer out of Negro schools, Negro teachers become surplus and lose their jobs. It matters not whether they are as well qualified as, or even better qualified than, other teachers in the school system who are retained. Nor does it matter whether they have more seniority. They were not employed as teachers for the school system—as the law would maintain—but as teachers for Negro schools.[6]

Black educators—present and former staff members of East Texas schools—reported to the NEA Special Committee that even where there has been some acceptance of student desegregation, resistance to the prospect of black principals supervising white teachers or of black teachers for white students remains firmly entrenched in Southern white communities. As a result, black educators are being dismissed, demoted, or "phased out." In large numbers, they are retiring early or resigning, often under the threat of dismissal and a bad reference if they refuse to leave of their own accord. "The black principal," a dismissed principal commented, "is rapidly becoming extinct in East Texas." As dual school systems are eliminated in East Texas, veteran black teachers and teacher education graduates are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain employment in the area. (A staff member of one district asked his superintendent whether there were different employment standards for white and black educators and just what were the qualifications required of black educators. The superintendent responded, "There just may be some standards that they [black teachers] can't measure up to." When asked to be more specific, the superintendent would only repeat: "There just may be some standards that they can't measure up to." The individual who related this incident to the Special Committee said that he was forced to agree that there certainly are some standards of employment in East Texas districts that the black educator can't "measure up to," and chief among them is the standard being ever more rigidly imposed—whiteness of skin.) Another result of desegregation in East Texas with serious implications for the future is the extent to which it deprives black students of any incentive to prepare themselves for entry into the education profession. One student who testified before the Committee said, "When a student sees only white teachers and no Negroes instructing, it makes him wonder why he should push himself to become a teacher if he won't get the chance to teach." Yet traditionally in East Texas, as in other Southern areas, education has been one of the very few professions open to black youth.

DISMISSALS WITHOUT NOTICE, STATEMENT OF CAUSE, OR HEARING

Texas tenure legislation offers virtually no protection either to the black or white teachers of the state. There is no statutory guarantee against unfair dismissal.

The Continuing Contract Law, enacted in 1967, is permissive in nature. The Legislature has recommended that local boards of education adopt fair dismissal procedures, including the tendering of notice with specific statement of cause, the right to a hearing upon request, and the right of appeal to the state education agency and the courts. Moreover, the Texas Legislature has stated and defined the grounds comprising just cause for dismissal and has recommended that dismissal resulting from necessary reduction of personnel shall be in reverse order of seniority in the specific teaching field. But local boards of education are under no legal obligation to adopt the recommended policies. Few of them have done so.

The Special Committee had extensive meetings with educators whose dismissal had coincided with the desegration of their district. Many of these individuals reported that they had received no notification in writing, that they had received no statement of cause, and that they had not been afforded dismissal hearings by their boards of education.

Two teachers (after 5 and 11 years' employment respectively in their district) were informed that their services were no longer needed when the superintendent opened the door to their classrooms while they were teaching and told them, "The Board voted last night not to renew your contract." Attempts by each teacher to obtain a statement of reasons or a written nonrenewal notice were to no avail. In another situation, although there was no statement of just cause, the reason for dismissal was made quite clear: The black teachers were called together by their superintendent and informed that the district was about to desegregate, that their school would be closed, and that the white community was "not ready" to accept Negro teachers. As a result, they too lost their positions.

In one community that has undergone complete "integration" of its schools, the black principals, the black teachers, the black janitors, the black bus drivers, and the black cafeteria employees have all disappeared. The black school has been abandoned. The only black employee still remaining with the school system is a grass cutter. In this community, there were no written statements of grounds for dismissal; there were no board hearings; the black employees were simply told that they were no longer needed.

Seven black teachers were dismissed from another district when the schools were desegregated. When their black principal asked the superintendent to reconsider the dismissal action, the principal was informed that he, too, would no longer be employed. In this instance, as in many other reported dismissal cases, the teachers and principal had been issued contracts containing the clause that reemployment for the coming year was "subject to placement." And in this instance, as in others, white teachers were employed following the release of the black teachers. The dismissed principal reported that although there were now about seven white teachers in black schools of the district, there were no black teachers in desegregated, formerly all-white schools.

Educators from two East Texas communities reported that since the advent of desegregation in their system, school officials have consistently "overhired" white personnel. They felt that the motivation was to ensure a sufficient supply of white staff members to compensate for any turnover in black professional staff, whether through retirement, resignation, or dismissal.

"GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL"

A common method of releasing black teachers is to inform them that the ADA (average daily attendance) has fallen and that the staff must be cut. Some of the districts have experienced an overall enrollment increase during the same years that black teachers have been released due to a "lowered ADA." In interviews with school administrators, staff assistants to the Special Committee inquired why, since there had been no overall loss in student population, the Negro teachers were "leaving." (The administrators would not accept the word *fired.)* The most frequent administrative responses were "for personal reasons," "for better jobs," and "retirement" or "family moving." In some instances, the superintendent announced other reasons, such as "poor attitude" or "immorality." One superintendent said, "They were not qualified for this district." One principal summed up the feeling that black teachers and principals have had since desegregation: "Why is it that some of us have been qualified for 10, 15, or 20 years and suddenly, with desegregation, we are no longer qualified?"

Testimony indicated that in districts where black schools have been closed or have lost enrollment through desegregation and school officials have released black teachers (including those with long seniority and master's degrees), white teachers with less experience and preparation (some without certification) have been employed to take care of the increased number of pupils in the newly desegregated schools. Where there have been bona fide "necessary reductions in staff," the seniority rule has not been followed when the senior man happens to be black.

TEACHERS IN POLITICS

The Fifty-Seventh Texas Legislature (1961) adopted a law providing that—

> No school district, Board of Education, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, or other administrator shall directly or indirectly coerce any teacher to refrain from participating in political affairs in his community, state or nation.

The State Board of Education adopted a corollary policy in 1961, instructing the Commissioner of Education to review any proven violation of Section 8 of Senate Bill No. 1 (above) "in accordance with his responsibility to cancel the administrative certificate of any person failing to administer the schools in accordance with the laws of the state."

Witnesses who appeared before the Special Committee expressed the conviction that many black educators have lost their positions because of their participation in such activities as voter registration drives. One witness testified, "I brought some of the voters from the Negro community to the polls. The next thing I know, they don't need my services next year."

In direct contradiction to state law, one East Texas board of education adopted a policy prohibiting its professional employees from participating in any form of political activity except voting. Following that action of the board, the effectiveness of political campaigning and voter registration activities among the black community succeeded in placing, for the first time, two black citizens on the board of education. Nine teachers, including several who had taken an active part in the political campaign, were dismissed the following year when black students were transferred from their school to a desegregated school.*

PHASING-OUT DEVICES

In some districts, the Special Committee learned, school officials are more subtle in ridding their desegregated systems of black teachers—or at least in reducing the contact that these teachers will have with white students. Black educators *are* transferred to the formerly all-white schools; but they may be assigned to a subject out of their field and then dismissed because of "inability to carry out assigned duties." Or they may be assigned to a federally funded program, and when the federal funds are withdrawn or exhausted, it is the black teacher who is dismissed. In most cases where black teachers are retained in desegregated schools, they are assigned as "special teachers" to classes with primarily black enrollment, or as counselors, working mostly with black students, or as librarians—or to other such positions entailing minimal contact with white students.

Black principals who are retained when their schools are closed are not retained as principals. They may be made assistant principals or they may be assigned to a central office position with undefined responsibilities, with low visibility, and with no authority.

WHO ARE THE "CROSS-OVER TEACHERS?"

The observations of the NEA Special Committee in East Texas tended to support the conclusions of a recent research study by Dr. Clifton Claye of Texas Southern University, "The Problems of Cross-Over Teachers." As a result of his survey of black and white teachers who had transferred to schools where the majority of the student population was of a different race than their own, Dr. Claye

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* Litigation supported by the NEA DuShane Emergency Fund for Teacher Rights has culminated in a federal court decision (*Montgomery, et al. v. White, et al., Tatum Independent School District*, Civil Action No. 4933, U.S. District Court, Eastern Division, Tatum, Texas, 1969), ordering the reinstatement and awarding of damages to one of these teachers on the grounds that his dismissal constituted a violation of the teacher's due process and fair consideration guarantees under the U.S. Constitution.

found that in almost all cases, the poorer white teachers—poorer by standards of training and experience—were assigned to black schools and that, conversely, the most well-qualified black teachers were selected for transfer to the white schools. A number of witnesses—both parents and teachers—who appeared before the Committee expressed concern about this situation. "We are being deprived," one parent said, "of our strongest teachers in exchange for the least competent whites. No matter what happens—segregation or desegregation—our kids are still the losers."

EFFORTS TO SEEK HELP THROUGH APPEALS TO HEW

East Texas educators reported that they have not been successful in bringing complaints to the attention of the Southwest Regional Office of HEW. (It was reported to the Committee that this office, located in Dallas, has a team of only six men, who are expected to service complaints and receive desegregation plans from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and the entire state of Texas.) Three teachers, one of whom represented a group, showed copies of letters that they had sent to HEW for assistance. Other than acknowledgment of their letters, the teachers were unaware of any action that the Dallas office of HEW had taken concerning their complaints. The periods of time since the teachers had filed their initial appeals varied from three months to more than a year.

Teachers are further discouraged from bringing complaints to HEW by the fact that the enforcement procedures of the Dallas office involve disclosure of complainants' names to school officials during the course of complaint investigation; as a result, the teachers feel that they are risking employment loss and/or an unfavorable reference simply by the act of complaining. (It has been reported that all regional offices of HEW are directed by the Headquarters Office in Washington not to disclose the names of complainants while a case is under investigation.)

Staff assistants to the NEA Special Committee consulted with key HEW officials in Washington to inquire if any positive action had been taken in response to complaints of teacher displacement in East Texas districts. The officials were unable to cite one single case where a school system's funds had been removed on the basis of such a complaint and investigation. When asked why, the response was that a landmark case is being sought. Since 1964, and with many cases of black teacher and principal displacement from which to choose, HEW has yet to find such a case. Possible reasons for this phenomenon will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapters of this report.

"Do We Have To Go to the White School?"

The transition from racially separate to shared facilities is especially difficult for the black student, for it is he who must bear the brunt of threats, the exclusions,

and the humiliations that appear to be part and parcel of the desegregation process. It is almost always the black student who attends the formerly all-white school, not the white child who attends the formerly black school. It is the black student who is the "outsider," and he is seldom allowed to forget it.

One mother who appeared before the Special Committee commented, "On some of the record books, 'w' is written after the white child's name and 'c' after the Negro child's name. Why is that? Are they grading our children by color rather than by performance?" When the Special Committee asked school administrators for statistics based upon race, the answer was that information was not available by race, for there are no distinctions made in the records.* It may be alleged that racial distinctions are not made in the records. However, these same districts are required by HEW (Subpart D, section 21, HEW Guidelines) to make periodic reports, including data on the racial composition of the student body and faculty in desegregated schools, in order to maintain their eligibility for federal funds.

Examples of the kinds of racial distinction that are made in the schools were provided by a group of "concerned students" in a letter they wrote to the PR&R Commission during their first year in a formerly all-white East Texas high school. The students wrote:

> Of the teachers who had been transferred to (the white high school) only a few were to teach any white students. We were to be taught by our own [black] teachers. The majority of the classes are either all white or black or predominantly white. The idea occurred to us that we were really two schools under one roof.
>
> The overall attitude of white teachers toward black students is satisfactory with a few exceptions. Some white teachers have referred to Negro students as "niggers." Of course, nothing was done about it. . . .
>
> It is obvious that we are not wanted in [the white students'] school clubs. Their means of keeping Negroes out is simply rejection on the basis of lack of qualifications. . . . For some of those students who have been successful in joining clubs, the atmosphere has been so uncomfortable that they lost interest, stopped attending meetings and have been dropped. . . .
>
> P.T.A. meetings have been held at times which have been inconvenient for Negro parents. The fact that our parents have not been invited to become an active part of the . . . P.T.A. does nothing to improve community relations.
>
> Our athletes have been accepted wholeheartedly, but the cheerleaders and majorettes have been rejected. Why? Did they feel that our cheerleaders and majorettes were not qualified or was it simply the fact that they did not want Negro cheerleaders and majorettes? Our girls are indeed capable for they were trained during the summer at an outstanding college. Now, it was a loss of time and money.

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* Throughout the study, the Committee's inquiries were severely hampered by the refusal of school officials to divulge information that would either discredit or substantiate the grievances that the Committee had heard. Predictably, the administrators who were questioned concerning these grievances responded with blanket denials of racial discrimination. In no instance, however, was there any substantive refutation of the reports of black teachers, students, and parents.

Of course, the students knew precisely why the black athletes were "accepted wholeheartedly." Athletic prowess is a great hurdler of racial barriers. In interscholastic, as in professional sports, it is a potent form of black bargaining power.

The Special Committee's findings in East Texas made it clear that the situation described by these students is not unique. Summarized below are the conditions described repeatedly by students, parents, and teachers from all of the districts studied.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

As the letter-writing students reported, participation by blacks in the student organizations of the formerly white schools is effectively discouraged. There are few black officers in the school clubs. The two school activities in which the blacks do participate are those which bring honor and fame to the school—the band and sports. ("Integrated" schools are winning more football games than they did as all-white schools.) But honor and fame do not come to the athletic "star" unless he is white. Before desegregation, athletic scholarships were awarded both to white and black team members in their separate schools; but they are seldom awarded to the black athlete on the integrated team. A white player who makes one field goal gets his picture in the paper. His black colleague who scores three touchdowns is mentioned in the last paragraph of the article. His picture does not appear in the paper. Similarly, in vocational-agricultural programs, as in academic subjects, although the black student in the desegregated school may excel, the honors are usually reserved for his white classmates.

There are many ways in which the black student may learn what others think of him and his racial background. "Our junior-senior prom is cancelled," several students reported. "Another dance, which the whites call the prom, is held in a private white club where Negroes are not allowed."

In some instances, faculty intervention prevents the participation of black students in extracurricular activities. One specific incident reported was the election of a black student by a desegregated class to be the class representative to the cheerleading team. The coach, whose daughter had also been vying for the honor, stormed into the classroom: "A'int no nigger gonna beat my daughter!" The election was reheld and the black girl lost.

DISCIPLINE

The Special Committee asked students what happened if a white student and a black student got into an argument or fight. The answers were the same from district to district. The white student "gets a lecture or is kept after school. The black student is suspended, maybe expelled for good."

Another high school student, a former leader at the all-black school in his district, testified that school had become "pretty rough" after he and a few of his friends participated in a civil rights demonstration at the school.

> Things were terrible during the presidential campaign. Wallace stuff was everywhere, so we blacks began wearing our Humphrey materials proudly. There were almost fights about that. The incident that really brought matters to a head was when those of us on the football team quit because of the unfair election for cheerleading girls. Some of us wore black gloves to protest. Everyone, except one, was expelled.

The Committee was unable to determine what rules had been violated to cause the expulsions.

When school administrators were asked if suspensions had increased since desegregation, most replied that they did not know since statistics were not kept by race. Only one superintendent remarked that he had noticed a slight rise in the number of expulsions among Negro youngsters.

The Special Committee heard, "When there is a particular substitute for our room, we know that we [blacks] might as well not go because she's going to throw the colored kids out within one period anyway. Everywhere she goes the colored kids have to stand in the halls all day. Most of us just stay home in the afternoon when she's there." This white teacher is still substituting; within that same district there are qualified black teachers who lost their positions when the system desegregated and who have not yet found other teaching employment.

In response to inquiries concerning the disciplining of white students who openly discriminate against their black classmates, students said, "We report it to the teacher, but she won't report to the principal. She tells us to go tell him ourselves. Sometimes we do. Sometimes he disciplines the person responsible." Other students said that they no longer even bother to report such incidents. An elementary boy remarked, "When I just couldn't take it any more from those white boys, and knowing the teacher or principal wasn't going to do anything to stop them, I just took care of business myself after school, for both me and my brother. Now they don't bother us much any more."

In some schools, the attitudes of the principals themselves make it obvious that they will not discipline white students who are guilty of racist behavior. For example, one black student told the Committee that the white principal of her school would refuse to listen to black children and would degrade and intimidate them: "I work in the office and I have heard the principal tease the Negro students for the way they talk. I have heard him yell, 'Speak the King's English.' At other times when Negro parents would visit the school, he would say, 'I jes' luv to hear them nigras tawk.' "

A black teacher told the Special Committee that her worst moments in the desegregated setting were when her former students from the all-black school would appeal to her to try to do something about the obvious discrimination and she would have to explain that there was little she could do, for similar things were happening to her.

The parent of two children who had been transferred to a formerly all-white school told the Special Committee, "My kids manage to put up with the kind of

treatment they get during the day, but sometimes they come home crying. And they ask me do they have to keep on going to the white school. And I just don't know what to tell them."

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

It was reported that, in general, the predominantly white schools have a wider variety and better quality of school facilities, equipment, and materials, and a broader curriculum than the black schools. The Special Committee did not hear any specific complaints concerning discriminatory allocation of instructional supplies and materials within the desegregated schools. However, the Committee did hear reports that when athletic equipment is distributed, the white students get the new, better-quality equipment; the black students, no matter what their position on the team, receive what is left. Testimony indicated that black athletes have threatened to resign from their teams in protest against such discrimination and that, as a result, the discriminatory allocation of equipment in their schools has ceased.

The curriculum in the formerly all-white school may have a broader scope than in the black school, particularly at the high school level where, some students reported, they would get a wider variety of trade and business subjects. However, the educational programs of the predominantly white schools contain much that is irrelevant to the lives of black children and much that is damaging to their sense of self-worth and racial pride. History is taught Southern-style. Aside from a fleeting mention of George Washington Carver and Booker T. Washington, the Afro-American contribution to American society is not discussed. In short, the teaching of history, in most instances, is designed to perpetuate in the white youngster a belief in the myth of white supremacy and to inculcate in the black child a sense of deepening alienation and resentment. (In a classroom of one recently desegregated school, a white boy said, "We ought to put all the niggers back in slavery." There was an angry response from black students and a tussle ensued. The principal then threatened the black students with suspension if there were any further fighting over the remark.)

In some districts, the Committee was told, desegregation has meant the closing of relatively new, structurally sound black schools (including some so new that they have not yet been fully paid for) and the reopening of abandoned white school buildings, which are put into use simply to guard the white students from the stigma of attending a "Negro school." The Special Committee read newspaper reports of additional bond funds being sought by East Texas boards of education to finance the renovation of condemned white schools to provide sufficient classroom space for white and black children. Black citizens reported that they have voted against the bond issues: "Why should we pay more taxes* just so those white children

* Contrary to the myths circulated by some land-owning segments of the population, the poor do pay property taxes. The burden of taxation falls most heavily on those who are poor and without property. The costs of property taxation are hidden in rental fees and in the price of consumer goods and services.

will never have to step into sound buildings where our youngsters went?" Only rarely do school officials desegregate a school that has been used to house black students. When this does occur, the use of the school is usually confined to special education or trade school purposes. One parent testified, "The Negro school had to be used in our district, and before the white students arrived, the name of the school was changed, the school was scrubbed, fumigated, and the toilet seats were changed."

SUMMATION

The NEA Special Committee found that the desegregation of East Texas schools is proceeding at a faster pace than in most Southern states.* School officials of most districts studied can report that they are in compliance either with federal desegregation guidelines or with court orders. But, as the study made abundantly clear, it is only a paper compliance. As desegregation continues, the grievances of the black community become more widespread and more severe. There is every evidence of racial discrimination in the continuing displacement and demotion of black educators; there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the increasing employment of white teachers in preference to blacks; there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the frequent exclusion of black students from participation and leadership positions in the student organizations of desegregated schools; and there is every evidence of racial discrimination in the treatment that black students commonly receive from their white classmates and, in some instances, from their white teachers and principals as well.

These grievances have long remained unresolved; they continue to be unrecognized by school officials. And now that the Supreme Court has ordered the immediate elimination of dualism in all Southern districts,[7] the prospect is that the situation will become worse—in East Texas and throughout the South. The frequency of teacher displacement and student mistreatment that accompanied desegregation "with all deliberate speed" is likely to accelerate as the rate of desegregation accelerates. The laws, including desegregation laws, have never worked well for black people. Unless present trends are halted, the new Supreme Court ruling will serve them no better than did the *Brown* decisions of 1954-55.

In the following section, the NEA Special Committee discusses the forces of school and community resistance that in East Texas, as in many other areas of the South, militate against the feared social change of desegregation. The Committee

* It should be noted, however, that a "desegregated school district" in East Texas (and elsewhere, North or South) is not, in most cases, a district where all the students, black and white, attend desegregated schools. Except in districts where the black enrollment is extremely small, one or more all-black schools usually remain even after the district is officially desegregated. In several of the districts studied, the black students of selected grades had been transferred by administrative directive to predominantly white schools; for other students, the official desegregation policy continued to be "freedom-of-choice." In view of the treatment so frequently accorded black students who have transferred to predominantly white schools, it is understandable that "freedom-of-choice" seldom produces more than token desegregation.

believes that an understanding of the pervasive and ingrained nature of this resistance may facilitate the development of far-reaching strategies through which the status quo may be changed. If there is such a change, the possibilities of racial harmony may be greater in the South than anywhere else in the nation. If there is no change, the possibilities of racial harmony are dim indeed—for the South and for the nation.

5. Patterns of Resistance

In the South as in the North, in this nation as in other nations, the history of social change is a history of conflict, for it is a universal tendency of society to deify its own traditions and to resist any challenge to the established social order. The conflict between the stresses of change and the forces of custom made the 1960's perhaps the most cataclysmic decade in American history since the Civil War. Amidst calls for law and order, the nation is in disarray: Its teeming, blighted cities; its rural slums; its bitterly devisive war abroad; and its alienated "outgroups" at home—the young, the nonwhite, and the poor—attest to the ramifying crisis of change. Our society has been unwilling to respond to the failure of its established social order until the consequences of that failure become seriously adverse. It is this unwillingness, this blind resistance to necessary social change that underlies the continuing racial struggle in the nation, in the South . . . and in the communities of East Texas.

If the forces of resistance to racial justice are more open and more intense in the South than elsewhere in the country, the reasons should not be too difficult to understand. In the South, racial segregation has been not only institutionalized; it has been legalized. In the South, racial discrimination not only is a fact of life; it is an ideology which, with the sanctity of law and custom, has long constituted a way of life.

After the *Brown* decisions of 1954-55, the South's elaborate legal structure of segregation began to give way—but not without prolonged pressure from the Civil Rights movement, from the courts, and from federal enforcement action. Laws can be reformed, but ingrained attitudes, and the institutions that reflect those attitudes, are not remade so easily. Thus, even as the legal basis for segregation was struck down, the struggle continued. It still continues; and there is no institution of Southern life that has escaped its effect. Perhaps most deeply affected is the public school system—the institution charged with responsibility for perpetuating the values and traditions of the established social order. But the public school system also has the power to be an important agent of social change—simply by bringing children together when they are young enough to escape the yoke of racial

prejudice and by teaching them the facts, rather than the myths, of history and of race.

> There are few questions in American life of greater ultimate importance to our society than the deceivingly simple problem of moving a child from a black to an integrated classroom. Destruction of the walls of legal separation in southern schools is an absolutely fundamental part of the national commitment required to destroy the caste system and make equal opportunity a reality rather than a mockery.[8] *

During the long procession of Septembers since the *Brown* decision, the walls of *legal* separation have been destroyed; and there has been some gradual change in attitude. Token desegregation has general acceptance now, even in the Deep South states. But the hard core of resistance is unmoved. Although school desegregation can no longer be avoided, it can, by various means, be controlled—controlled in such a way as to minimize its advance. "Freedom-of-choice"—on the surface, an eminently fair and democratic plan—proved to be one of the most effective means of tokenism.

> In requiring the Negro to take the initiative, it asks him to put aside a century of fear and suspicion. The Negro knows full well that the whites are acting out of forced compliance, instead of contrition. It is one thing to open a door willingly and invite a guest to enter; it is quite another to set the door ajar and expect an entrant to brave the menacing scowls of those who stand on guard.[9]

On the basis of statistics that count schools, not students, it is possible to report, as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare did report in September 1969:

> At the opening of school this month, HEW and individual school districts in 14 states reached a significant milestone in equal educational opportunity. Reports from the first 10 days indicate that school desegregation under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act proceeded on the whole very smoothly, producing the largest volume of desegregation at once since the Supreme Court ordered the end of the dual school system in 1954.[10]

On the basis of statistics that count schools, not students, Texas (including its Black Belt eastern areas) can be described as a "beacon state in school desegregation." The statistics lie. In many of those districts where desegregation is said to be proceeding "very smoothly," neither the spirit nor the letter of the law is being upheld:

> The necessity of overcoming the effects of the dual school system required integration of faculties, facilities, and activities, as well as students. [The Fifth Circuit Court, *Jefferson County* case.]

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* Even this statement, drawn from a volume that expresses the author's profound commitment to racial integration, bears the taint of racial bias: Mr. Orfield refers to a one-way integration process—"moving a child from a black [not white] to an integrated classroom."

There is an important difference between desegregation and integration: *Desegregation* refers to the ending of segregation; it means breaking down the de jure and de facto barriers to the physical juxtaposition of black and white; it means that blacks and whites may be housed in the same school, may be served in the same restaurant, may live in the same neighborhood. All of the school districts included in this study were, to some extent, desegregated. *Integration* refers to humans relating to each other as equals. None of the school districts included in this study was integrated. Desegregation has been carried out in such a way as to avoid the possibility of integration. Desegregation has proceeded; integration is resisted. The patterns of resistance are not obscure; they have been described in the foregoing section: the one-way transfer of students—from black to white schools and seldom the reverse; the failure to protect black students from harassment and inequitable treatment once they are in a predominantly white school; the failure to prepare educators and students—black and white—for desegregation; and the continuing displacement and demotion of black educators (producing in these individuals an understandable conflict of interest between their need for job security and their commitment to integrated education).

How is it possible to continue these practices of obstructionism while preserving the facade of compliance with the law? If the educators, the parents, and the students complained *persistently* enough, *clearly* enough, and *together,* perhaps it would not be possible. But there are few complaints. In the small towns and rural areas of East Texas, there prevails among the black educators and parents a surface quietude in the face of flagrant injustice. Abuses harsh enough to goad even the most peaceful individual to protest are met, for the most part, with a kind of cynical resignation. Only among the students—perhaps because they are still young enough to have hope, perhaps because they do not yet have an economic stake in society—did the Committee observe evidence of active resistance; and even among the students there was little evidence that such resistance is sustained or widespread.

GRIEVANCE SUPPRESSION: AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF RESISTANCE

The fact is that the enforcement of Civil Rights laws has touched the East Texas communities only in superficial ways. The real laws that govern East Texas are unwritten; and they are upheld by the forces of economic power, political power, and the resultant powers of coercion—all held in white hands. In the places of public accommodation and in the schools there has been desegregation, but every institution of community life supports and sustains what has always existed—a segregated society. Every aspect of that society conspires in suppressing the one force that might disturb the status quo: the initiative of black citizens, whether that initiative might be to run for political office, to participate in a voter registra-

tion drive, to institute a legal action against discrimination, or even to stand up in a school board meeting and ask a question.

It is not claimed here that the members of the white establishment in East Texas (or any other part of the South) have been sitting down and plotting together any sort of Machiavellian master plan for keeping black people quiet. The methods of grievance suppression—intimidation, concealment, and isolation—do not need to be plotted. They are instinctive, ingrained into the cultural tradition, and innate in the historic relationship of whites to blacks. Such coercive strategies are possible in any relationship where one party holds the whip hand of power; they are part and parcel of the paternalistic style of school management that has continued in many Southern areas (although not confined to the South alone). NEA studies in Wilcox County, Alabama; Hyde County, North Carolina; and DeKalb County, Georgia, have documented similar methods of coercion.

INTIMIDATION

> . . . make them live in a valley of fear . . . a valley guarded by our men who will be both their only hope and their source of fear. [A. Hitler]

In one East Texas town, the chief of police said:

> The community expects me to keep them niggers in their place. It don't matter how I feel about it . . . if I want my job I gotta keep them niggers in their place. Sure, sometimes we have to sap them down—so what, they recognize we are their friends, even though we have to sap them down. We take care of them and sometimes help them get jobs.

This is the terrible paradox: Always it has been the white man—the man who has been "sapping" him down for centuries—to whom the black man has had to look for help. The times are changing, but they are changing very slowly. In East Texas change is glacial. It is still the white man who finances the black citizen's home or business—and may foreclose his mortgage. It is still the white man who rents him his house—and may evict him. It is still the white man who hires him—and may fire him. It is still the white man who is his judge, his prosecutor, and his lawyer; typically, white men still comprise his jury.

The schools are the only public institution where black citizens and their children have been able to look to a black authority figure. But the authority of the black educator within the school system has never extended much beyond the school or schools in his charge. In the words of a black East Texas principal who met with the Committee: "I only do what I'm told. Taking orders from the Superintendent—that's the limit of my 'authority.' " Although a bit closer to the white world than many of his brothers, he also is subject to its pressures of intimidation —and never more so than now, when his professional and economic security, his entire career investment, are jeopardized by the threat of displacement as school desegregation proceeds. For the few teachers who are transferred to the

formerly all-white school, there is the constant fear of dismissal on the grounds of "failure to carry out assignment," "failure to relate well with students," or similar charges, true or false. (Whether such fears have a basis in reality or not, the intimidating effect is the same.) The prospect of further desegregation is a constant lurking threat to the educators who remain in the all-black school. For those who have the temerity to challenge the discriminatory practices of their school system, there is the additional danger of a bad reference, which may bar them from professional employment even in school districts many miles distant.

Educators who have been dismissed by their desegregating school systems and who have accepted early retirement or have found other employment in their communities might then be expected to take an active role in the effort to bring about social change. But even if their new positions are secure (and retirement is virtually the only secure status that a black citizen can have in these communities), they still have relatives who are subject to economic reprisal. For example, the Special Committee was told of a black citizen's refusal to let his name be used in connection with an interracial human relations council that had been formed in his community. His refusal made sense to the white members of the council. After 15 years as a teacher he had been fired when his school system had desegregated; his wife, however, was still employed with the system, and he could ill afford to risk having her removed from the job.

The initiative of black teachers to effect change is stifled, not only because of the immediate threat of job loss, but because teachers, too, have to deal with white bankers, white creditors, white landlords, and white judges. Teachers, too, fear physical, as well as economic, reprisal. The very weight of white dominion has a chilling effect.

In a climate of fear, rumors spread; and each feeds on the other. Stories would circulate, the Committee was told, that all the black teachers of a district were to be fired, and that no more black teachers were to be employed. The reality, although grim, might be considerably less devastating than the rumor. The Special Committee heard several reports that it was unable to verify. For example, a white parent signed a freedom-of-choice form to send his child to a nearby Negro school and his home burned; a principal "spoke out on issues" and was arrested on an armed robbery charge, even though he had substantial proof of his innocence. Coincidence or intimidation? There is no proof either way. But in a community permeated by fear—where security of person, property, and position is in doubt—every appearance of intimidation adds to the tension and further undermines the will of those who are oppressed to challenge their oppressors.

CONCEALMENT OF TRUTH

Although civil rights laws have not yet effected fundamental social change throughout the Deep South, they have made a difference in the methods used to maintain the established social order. In the old days when racial segregation had

the force of law, as well as custom, there was little need to camouflage racial discrimination. The signs *White* and *Colored* were stamped on such places as restrooms, waiting rooms, and water fountains; but even without the actual printed notice, the door to every kind of political, social, religious, and occupational activity was unmistakably marked according to race. No black student would dare apply for admission to a white school, no matter how blatantly unequal the separate facilities were. Certain kinds of employment were open only to whites, and there was no need to pretend otherwise. But now, in East Texas, as in other parts of the South, there is some need for pretense. Particularly in the public schools—the community institution most immediately affected by desegregation laws—it has been necessary to replace open discrimination with the tactics of concealment and evasion that have long been used in other parts of the country.

In the displacement of black teachers and principals, the term *not qualified* has been perhaps the most common substitute for the sign *white only*. For many years, black job applicants in the North and West have been familiar with this screening device. "Freedom-of-choice" in the South, like "open enrollment" policies in the North and West, has been an effective means of evading the principles of the *Brown* decision.

But in East Texas, as in other areas of the Deep South, certain conditions prevail (in addition to the climate of intimidation, already discussed) which leave the black educators in a uniquely defenseless position against such subterfuges. Chief among these are the following:

1. *The permissive nature of the state's Continuing Contract Law, which gives local boards of education literally a free hand to establish, or not to establish, their own standards for employment retention and dismissal.* Without tenure protection, the educator who is dismissed on spurious grounds has little or no administrative recourse, even through appeal to the state education agency. Some East Texas educators have taken their case to the State Commissioner and Board of Education, but there have been no successful appeals to the state from East Texas in recent years. In most instances, the state has refused to assume jurisdiction on the basis that the local districts involved were not operating under the provisions of the Continuing Contract Law. In response to one such appeal, recently filed, the State Commissioner of Education announced that since the district in question had not adopted the tenure provision of the law, "there is no provision requiring . . . District to reemploy teachers whose contracts are expiring . . . no matter how long or satisfactory their services may have been."

2. *The absence or ambiguity of local board policies relative to the standards, rights, and responsibilities of professional employment.* In meetings with school administrators, staff assistants to the NEA Special Committee asked to see copies of board policy relating to the employment rights and responsibilities of educators. In most instances, the response was to deny access to policy manuals. One superintendent said that the school policy book was available only to taxpayers of the

district. In the few policy manuals that were shown to Committee assistants, there were no clearly stated policies on either the substantive or procedural aspects of fair dismissal. Among the dismissal provisions were the following:

> The Board most willingly grants hearings, if requested after considering information submitted by the superintendent.
>
> All personnel will be protected in the various positions *so long as they are loyal to their jobs and to the administration; and so long as the job for which they have been hired remains as such.* [Italics added.]

Such protection is pure illusion. In some districts, even disagreement with the administration may be construed as "disloyalty"; and in districts where desegregation brings continuing changes in staffing needs, the "subject to placement" clause is veiled assurance of job insecurity.

With respect to employment standards, the policy handbook of one district stated, "The best qualified applicant does not mean from the standpoint of college preparation alone, but also applies to his personality, temperament, and cultural qualities." According to a policy manual of another district, employment qualifications include "excellent character, good professional attitude, sense of humor, neat appearance, and alert manner." Such generalized and subjective criteria as these, of course, are wholly susceptible to personal judgment—and prejudice. They convey no clear understanding of what is expected of an educator in terms of experience, preparation, and specific professional competencies; thus, they provide no clear-cut basis on which to challenge an administrative decision. They have the effect of legitimizing arbitrary employment practices and of camouflaging racial discrimination.

In the policy handbooks examined, Committee assistants could find no written procedures for teacher evaluation. Black principals told the Committee that each year they made personnel recommendations to the central administration based on their own evaluations, but that frequently their recommendations were disregarded without explanation. When the superintendents were asked what evaluation procedures they used, two testified that they speak with the particular teacher about his performance first, then recommend (or not) in the spring. According to the teachers who testified, there is very little supervision or evaluation from the central office. The teachers of one district said, "Sometimes the superintendent will cast a look into the classroom, and he usually comes to the open house at our schools, but that is all." A teacher from another district reported that her sole evaluation had consisted of visits by two persons from the central office: "Once, a lady came from the county and she wrote that I sat down too much when I taught. Later the superintendent came over, and he wrote that I stand up too much and told me to sit down sometimes."

In such an information and policy vacuum as exists in school districts of East Texas, the educator whose rights are violated—whether through unfair dismissal, demotion, or through failure to "qualify" for employment—may *feel* deeply ag-

grieved, may be convinced that he is the victim of racial discrimination. Yet without clearly established rules against which to measure an administrative action, he may not recognize that he has a *valid* grievance, remediable in law, even if not through administrative channels.

3. *The paternalistic tradition of school management.* Neither teachers nor parents in East Texas communities—least of all black teachers and black parents—are accustomed to being "let in" on educational decision making. Development of public school policy is only nominally a public matter. Testimony indicated that in some districts citizens have difficulty in learning the location and time of board meetings, although state law requires the public posting of the location and time of the meetings of all governmental bodies, including boards of education. Citizens from several districts testified that school board meetings are frequently not open to the public, that there is often no press coverage of the public meetings, and that board minutes are not distributed, even to board members, but are held in a central office location where people may come in and ask to see them. Article 6252-17, enacted by the 60th Legislature in 1967, amended in 1969, prohibits governmental bodies from holding meetings closed to the public, except when the body is deliberating on personnel matters, matters relating to the acquisition of real property, or matters affecting security. Despite these provisions, the policy handbooks of two East Texas districts, while stating that regular meetings shall be open to the public, make the following exceptions:

> The Board may meet in executive session when in their judgement [sic] circumstances warrant it.
>
> Special and/or executive meetings may be called by the Superintendent . . . , the President of the Board of Trustees, or by any three (3) members of the Board upon notice, either written or oral, to the President of the Board of Trustees or the Superintendent. . . .

In neither policy handbook did there appear any restriction on matters that could be deliberated or actions that could be taken in executive session.

The white communities of East Texas have some voice in educational policy making through their representation on the local board of education; the black communities, with few exceptions, are without board representation.

Interviews with black educators, parents, and students made it clear that they have been kept in a state of confusion and ignorance concerning the actual process of desegregation—how and when it would be undertaken; which schools would be utilized; which students would be involved; or which of the black teachers, if any, would be assigned to the formerly all-white schools. Teachers and students are not prepared for the experience of desegregation. Black teachers reported that they learn of desegregation plans in the same way and at the same time as the public—by reading about them in the newspaper a week or two before the beginning of the school year. It is at this time that students and teachers are informed of their school assignments for the year; and it is at this time that many teachers

learn that the "subject to placement" clause in their contract means no placement at all. With such short notice, of course, there is very little opportunity to protest the decisions that have been made before such decisions are actually implemented.

Recent events have newly demonstrated that there is no East Texas—or Southern—monopoly on the tactics of concealment and confusion in matters of school desegregation. Following the July 1969 announcement by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare postponing the deadline for full compliance and suggesting that there would be a relaxation of the HEW Desegregation Guidelines, there was a rash of conflicting statements from federal Administration officials. Even before the present Administration was installed, the very fact that there would be an administrative change in Washington prompted a number of school districts in East Texas (and elsewhere in the South) to renege on desegregation plans that had already been approved by HEW. The uncertain stance of the present Administration with respect to the desegregation issue has produced endless confusion, alternately raising and lowering the hopes of both whites and blacks. The October 1969 decision of the Supreme Court in the Holmes County, Mississippi, case, ordering the immediate termination of dual school systems, does not clarify the confusion. How and when the decision will be carried out by federal administrators is yet unknown.

Meanwhile, the uncertainties remain. The people who have complained the least are those who have been affected the most adversely by the results of desegregation. Without a clear understanding of their legal and professional rights and responsibilities, without knowing what is expected of them or what treatment will be accorded to them by their local districts, and without knowing how to go about processing a valid grievance, the black educators, who have been the strongest advocates of integration, are rendered virtually powerless against a desegregation process that works to their continuing disadvantage.

ISOLATION

In most localities of East Texas, black citizens lack the voting strength of a population majority. Of even greater seriousness, they lack the political organization essential to effective political effort—whether through bloc voting or through coordinated group action in seeking redress of grievances. The communities in this part of the state are not so widely scattered nor is the population sparsity so extreme as to prohibit the political organization of blacks; however, the absence of a center of black population density and leadership, together with the constant presence of a watchful white establishment, inhibits the political cohesion of the black citizenry. The proliferation of small school districts is another inhibiting factor. Black educators and parents, isolated from each other within one district, are further isolated from those who share similar concerns and grievances in neighboring districts throughout the region. School district reorganization, *unless*

gerrymandered to fragment further the voting strength of blacks, could have a unifying effect.

At the present time, however, the black educators, like the other members of the black communities of East Texas, are politically isolated and powerless. Surrounded by the real and rumored pressures of white intimidation, they have been effectively discouraged from joining together in any sustained and organized effort to defend their own professional and civil rights. Without strong group support, the aggrieved teacher or principal must either submit to mistreatment or undertake the danger of fighting his case alone.

No alternative seems to offer hope. If the educator attempts to grieve individually, he faces the almost certain prospect of failure and the possibility of reprisal, not only against himself but against members of his family as well. If he attempts to join or organize a professional or civil rights group as a means of initiating a collective grievance, he finds that there is no organization to join and few who are willing to participate in an organizing effort.

For reasons discussed in the concluding section of this report, the present possibilities of collective action within the merged local teachers organization of East Texas are limited. Thus, the culminating injustice against the black educator in East Texas is the fact of his own isolation. As applicant, supplicant, defendant, or complainant, he stands alone against the power of the all-white establishment.

END RESULTS—A SELF-FULFILLING EXPECTATION

There is no way of fully assessing the results of desegregation in East Texas; there is no way of measuring accurately either the psychological or practical effects it has had on the black educators and students who, having looked forward with hope to integration, *found that they themselves were* the victims of a desegregation screening process that accepted a few and granted equality to none.

No statistics are available to show how many black teachers and principals have left East Texas, how many have left the state, or how many have moved away from the South entirely, in the effort to find employment in education or in other fields. Because of the difficulties involved in uprooting their lives—in breaking away from home, relatives, and friends—some have become weekend commuters from such cities as Houston or Dallas. Some have accepted nonteaching employment. The Special Committee met with one ex-teacher, fully certificated and with many years' experience, who had taken a job as a maid in the home of a white couple, both high school dropouts.

For those black educators who remain employed in East Texas, there is no present security regardless of what they do—whether they actively assume the risk of challenging discrimination or whether they passively accept the risk of simply being a black teacher or principal in a desegregating school district in the South. Most of the employed black educators in East Texas have taken the path of passive acceptance, waiting stoically for their expectations of hardship to be

fulfilled. Those expectations are fulfilled in rumor and in reality with just enough frequency to cast a pall of hopelessness over an entire region. Thus, the vicious circle is complete: With so little countering resistance from the victims of injustice, the white majority's blind resistance to social change is allowed to go unchecked, its injustices to multiply.

6. Possibilities of Remedy

In this concluding chapter, the NEA Special Committee speaks primarily to the black educators of East Texas.

Typically, investigation and study reports of the National Education Association conclude with recommendations for courses of remedial action that might be initiated by the various parties involved in the problems under study. In this report, however, there will be no attempt to make recommendations to school and governing officials.

- It should be clear to these officials and their communities that they are incurring tragic educational and economic losses in failing to ensure equality of educational opportunity, so that every student—black and white—can achieve his maximum potential as a productive, contributing member of society.

- It should be clear that in the continuing displacement of black educators, school systems and communities that can ill afford it are losing valuable human resources of talent, skill, and professional commitment.

- It should be clear that those who persist in defiance of orderly social change merely invite chaotic and disruptive change.

Although the truth of the above statements is self-evident, it would be unrealistic to assume their acceptance as truth by the majority of the white citizens of East Texas. Such acceptance would constitute disavowal of an inherited system of values that is intrinsic to the East Texas—and traditionally Southern—way of life. The Special Committee recognizes that in the communities of East Texas, as elsewhere, the blind impulse of the dominant group is to resist any challenge to the established social order. The concepts of racial integration and racial equality threaten to disrupt that established social order and, in so doing, to strike at the very core of what the dominant group believes about itself. For in their resistance to social change, proponents of the myth of white racial superiority are not only defending an inherited value system; as true believers in that system, and the society based on it, they are also defending their own sense of integrity and self-

worth. Where laws have failed to penetrate the hard core of such resistance, no mere exhortation is likely to succeed.

Thus, it is abundantly clear to this Committee that persuasion through reasoned analysis—the usual procedure of NEA study reports—will not be an effective means of influencing East Texas school officials to stem the tide of teacher displacement, to redress the grievances of black educators, and to carry out desegregation in such a way as to achieve true integration. These officials are products of their society and, as such, are as immovably opposed to social change as any other element of that society. Even if there were school board members who had freed themselves from the rigid traditionalism of their environment and who wished to move in the direction of racial justice, they would be limited in their ability to do so. For school boards, like all public bodies, are not autonomous and do not operate in a vacuum, but, in theory and in fact, represent a constituency. In theory, they represent the voters and serve the public good. In fact, they sometimes represent special interests that are in opposition to the public good. In any case, they are subject to pressure. The school boards of East Texas are unexceptional in the fact that they represent and are constantly subject to the overwhelming pressure of the white majority. East Texans—black and white—understand the monolithic power of the white establishment, which blindly adheres to a social order based on the twin traditions of racial segregation and discrimination. To admit equality of opportunity anywhere would be to undermine racial discrimination everywhere. This would mean the end of a way of life, with all of its cherished advantages for some and all of its hardships for others.

Thus, even if there were school board members and administrators who wished to comply with the letter and the spirit of desegregation laws, they would be effectively blocked from doing so in the absence of some greater countervailing pressure than now exists to force and sustain such compliance.

THE NECESSARY USES OF POWER

Obviously, these conclusions are not new; nor do they describe a peculiarly Southern situation. The susceptibility of governing institutions to the influence of dominant power groups is a fact of political life; the political dominance of white, middle-class, and affluent groups is a fact of American life. The historic struggle of the Civil Rights Movement, and much of its internal conflict, has centered on the efforts of various groups within the Movement to devise and apply the necessary combination of pressures—persuasion, negotiation, political action, court action, and nonviolent and violent direct action—to counteract the overriding influence of a white power monopoly on the governing institutions of this nation. What the civil rights struggle has shown, what has been shown by every significant movement for social change throughout history, is that an entrenched interest seldom will surrender its advantage without resistance. Power can only be countered with power. It is a lamentable fact—but nonetheless a fact of human

nature—that the conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots" of society will never be equitably resolved through appeals to the generosity and goodwill of the former. Such resolution will only come about when the dominant social group feels its own status threatened by the organized pressures of the aggrieved. It is a basic truth of power relationships that the responsiveness of the majority power-holder to minority interests increases in direct proportion to the amount of bargaining power held by the minority group.

THE POTENTIAL SOURCES OF POWER

What are the sources of bargaining power available, or potentially available, to the black teachers and principals of East Texas? It is obvious that they will accomplish little through the attempt to act on an individual basis; if their initiative is ever to be asserted effectively, it must be through collective action. In the school systems and communities of East Texas, the pressures against such action are pervasive and powerful. And yet, by continuing submission to these pressures, the educators are, in a sense, collaborating in their own defeat. Perhaps for these educators, as for any group that has long been subject to the dominance of others, the first step toward assertion of power is the development of confidence in their own ability to effect change. The Special Committee believes that such confidence and such ability can be derived from the power of organization, through which there can be a collective application of restraining and persuasive influences on the actions of school officials. In the following sections, the Special Committee explores four possible sources of organizational power: (1) the imported power of national or state organizations; (2) the potential power of existing merged local education organizations; (3) the potential power of a caucus of occupational interest formed by black educators; and (4) the coalition of power derived through alliance with local citizens groups.

NATIONAL OR STATE ORGANIZATIONS

In Litigation. Recent court decisions of particular relevance to the problems of teacher displacement were cited in Chapter 3 of this report. Of precedential value, influencing those decisions were the following:

- *Franklin v. County School Board,* 360 F. 2d 325 (4th Cir. 1966), which held that Negro teachers are employed by the district and not by the school and should be treated as all other teachers in instances of school consolidation.

- *Johnson v. Branch,* 364 F. 2d 177, 179-80 (4th Cir. 1966), *cert. denied,* 385 U.S. 1003 (1967), which ruled unconstitutional the "arbitrary and capricious dismissal" of a teacher. (In 1967, the Supreme Court refused jurisdiction in the case, thereby sustaining the lower court decision.) This was the first time that an individual in a nontenure state successfully challenged a local school board's contention that

it does not need to give reasons for not rehiring because it has no obligation to a teacher once his contract has ended. (Since the teacher had been active politically, the defense held that she was being punished for exercising rights guaranteed by the Constitution.)

Most recently, and of immediate application in East Texas, was the following decision:

- *Montgomery, et al. v. White, et al., Tatum Independent School District, supra,* which ruled that a local board policy banning the rights of teachers to express political opinions and engage in political activity is in violation of the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition. The court further held that the infringement on the plaintiff's constitutional rights was the same if he had resigned because his further employment was conditioned on the surrender of those rights or if he had been refused employment because of his past exercise of such rights.

Each of these class action suits (suits filed by groups of teachers) was financed by national and state organizations. The last-named case was financed by the NEA DuShane Emergency Fund for Teacher Rights, with support from the Texas Classroom Teachers Association. The first two cases cited had the financial backing of the DuShane Emergency Fund and the black education associations of the states involved (Virginia and North Carolina).* Legal defense funds continue to be available from such organizations as these. In cases of need, the DuShane Emergency Fund Committee also grants subsistence monies to teacher-plaintiffs. The financial and legal resources of state teachers organizations are somewhat more limited than at the national level; but the Texas Classroom Teachers Association has shown an increasing commitment to protection of the civil and professional rights of its members, including the problems of black teacher displacement.

Litigation, however, is not a generally applicable means of remedy. It is an expensive, tedious process, and one which places great emotional and mental strain on the teacher-plaintiff. Few teachers who are involved in dismissal cases find it possible to remain unemployed throughout the lengthy period of litigation. And even though the case may result in a reinstatement order (together with award of damages), few teachers who have been involved in dismissal cases have chosen to return to their former positions. The long-range significance of such litigation—to the teaching profession at large and to the black members of that profession particularly—lies in its precedential value in affecting subsequent court decisions, thus extending the reach of constitutional protection of rights and applying legal restraints upon the power of local school officials who would abridge those rights.

But for the great volume of grievances that are arising from the discriminatory treatment of black educators as school desegregation proceeds, litigation cannot be recommended as an effective method of remedial action. The body of civil

* The black and white education associations of these states have since merged.

rights law that has grown out of court decisions is a necessary foundation for remedial action; but, as every black citizen in this country knows, laws alone do not effect social change.

In Administrative Complaints. As noted in an earlier section of this report, the route of administrative appeal—either to the state education agency or to the regional office of HEW—has not been a successful one for the black educator of East Texas. The lack of a mandatory tenure law and the limitations of HEW complaint investigation procedures are obvious deterrent factors to the usefulness of such appeals as a method of grievance resolution. The Special Committee is persuaded, however, that even if these grievance channels were more readily accessible and even if they were effective, the desegregation-related grievances of black teachers and principals in East Texas would still persist. Neither lawsuits nor administrative complaints nor any other externally applied pressure will be capable of resolving the mounting problems of discriminatory employment, dismissal, demotion, and assignment in East Texas unless the educators *themselves* organize to assert their own professional interests. Any action taken by the federal Executive or Judicial branch—if it is to have lasting or widespread effect—must be accompanied by sustained, collective action at the local level.

MERGED LOCAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

Education associations were originally formed, and operated for many years, as a kind of general-purpose, generally nonabrasive organization dedicated (at least in rhetoric) to advancing the overall interests of the school district and the particular interests of administrators, boards of education, parent groups, and students. Largely uncovered by this broad service umbrella were the occupational interests of teachers. In the early days of teacher organization, however, this was not seen as a serious omission, for teachers were trained to identify their own interests with those of the school board and school administration. Only the "unprofessional" association member would dare to dissent from this harmony of teacher-school district interest. Under the guise of professionalism, teachers, not unwillingly, submitted to the embrace of paternalism. It was generally accepted that what was good for the school district, for the board, and for the administration was also good for the teacher; and in those areas of particular concern to teachers, the superintendent would know what was best and would protect them.

Of course, times have changed. In many areas of the country, teachers have learned that the mark of professionalism is not dependence and docility, but the assertion of mature, disciplined responsibility in the interests of the profession and of education. Largely as a result of their collective application of power within their organizations, the National Education Association and many of its state and local affiliates have assumed as their primary function the assertion of the professional and *occupational* interests of educators, with the purpose of achieving

through concerted action those professional goals that cannot be achieved through individual action.

But there are some exceptions. Most particularly in the rural and small-town areas of the South, the mantle of administrative paternalism is still extended over educators and their organizations. The fact is, however, that the old ways simply do not work any longer. In desegregating districts—specifically in the desegregating districts of East Texas—large numbers of educators are not being "taken care of" by their superintendent. In the days when educators felt assured of their superintendent's protection against unfair dismissal, they saw no real need for a law to assure security of employment. In the days when educators felt assured of their superintendent's protection against unfair assignments, demotions, or other violations of their rights, they saw no real need for local grievance procedures or for other policies that would assure freedom from arbitrary treatment. But since the advent of desegregation, the white communities have given their superintendents new instructions. It has been made explicitly clear that because they are black, some educators are not wanted as teachers of white children or as principals of schools where white students constitute even a small percentage of the total student population. The protective function of the superintendent can no longer be extended to all of his professional staff. As desegregation has proceeded, black educators have learned that their professional salvation lies neither in the law nor in paternalism. Increasing numbers of them have come to believe that their only protection lies in organization. But they are not finding this protection within their merged education associations.

Displaced black teachers and principals who met with the Special Committee stated that it had never occurred to them to go to their associations for help because they knew such help would not be granted. Their testimony indicated that there are few black officers in the local associations of East Texas and that the black members have virtually no influence on the decisions that are made by their associations.

Within their paternalistic school setting, advancement of the occupational interests of any educator members—white or black—is still not seen as a major function of the local education associations in East Texas. But the disinclination of these associations to be concerned with the problems of black teacher displacement may be the result of other factors, as well:

- Many of the white teachers are products of the East Texas society; some of these may yet be bound by the yoke of that society's inherited racial attitudes.

- There may be some conflict of interest on the part of those white educators who find themselves in competition with their black colleagues for available teaching and school management positions.

In any case, it is imperative that the white educators of East Texas commit themselves to a value judgment and to a prompt ordering of professional association

priorities. It is essential that they recognize early the two alternatives that they face: (1) development of a merged association that is fully responsive to the needs of all its members, and one that is able to realize the potential strength of a thoroughly cohesive, racially unified professional organization; or (2) continuation of the present method of association functioning, accepting the risks of membership losses, increasing factionalism within the organization, and the eventual reestablishment of a separate black educators' group. Eventual racial separation will be the almost certain result if the interests and needs of black educators remain unmet within the merged associations.

In Texas, as in other states, if the merged associations are thus split apart, the constructive power potential of educators will be lost before it even begins to be fully realized. The result will be a tragically lost opportunity for racial understanding and for organizational advancement in both the professional and the public interest.

BLACK OCCUPATIONAL CAUCUS

For black educators in the South, traditionally among the most secure and integration-minded members of their communities, the ordeal of desegregation has conveyed a message of harsh truth: That there can be no integration of groups except on terms of intergroup equality. When one party holds all the power and dictates all the terms and conditions of merger—or of desegregation—the fate of the powerless group will be continued powerlessness, suppression of self-interest, and submergence of group identity. This is what has happened in the desegregation of East Texas schools and in the merger of East Texas associations. There are black educators in East Texas and other parts of the state who believe that the situation can be saved, but the black educators themselves must do the saving. The Special Committee shares this belief.

Obviously, no single teacher or small group of teachers operating alone within one community is going to be able to make a difference in the policy direction of a school system or of a local association. Nor will many individual teachers be able to make a difference—not without organization, not without a firm identity of common interests and legitimate representation of those interests, not without faith in their own ability to make decisions, and not without a willingness to accept the price of freedom: personal responsibility for the effect of the decisions they make.

There are now approximately 15,000 black educators in the state of Texas; more than half of these are in East Texas. Most black educators in Texas—approximately 12,000—belong to state, as well as to their local, associations. At present, they possess no more than the *potential* of group strength. Only through organization can that potential be realized. Only through organization can the particular interests of black educators be legitimately represented to the leadership of the merged organization. Traditionally, black "leaders" (whether in occupational or

community settings) have not been elected by black people; they have been the "safe Negroes," carefully hand-picked by whites.

The Special Committee believes that the potential power of black educators can be realized in this way: *By the formation of a black occupational caucus, with its own elected representatives, authorized to negotiate with the white leadership of the association. Negotiation would be based on the premise that the mutual interests of both black and white educators in preserving a merged organization can be served only if that organization agrees to serve the particular needs of its black, as well as its white, membership.* Assertion of the interests of black, as well as white, members before local boards of education and defense of the professional rights of black, as well as white, members are clearly the responsibility of the merged association. The energies and skills of 12,000 educators, the financial benefit of their membership dues, and the interests of white educators in maintaining a racially unified organization are not entirely insignificant sources of black bargaining power with the leadership of that merged association.

The NEA Special Committee is persuaded that there are many areas of shared professional interest between black and white educators that can best be served through the strength of *united* professional organizations. For example, the enactment of a mandatory statewide tenure law in Texas would be to the advantage of all teachers. The improvement of state salary minimums would be to the advantage of all teachers. The improvement of educational programs and facilities would be to the advantage of all teachers. A united professional organization should have far greater power in effecting such improvements than two separate associations—especially when bitter factionalism makes easy the game of playing one group off against the other.

The Special Committee proposes the formation of a black occupational caucus—not only at the local, regional, and state level in Texas, but in other states and at the national level as well—because it is convinced that true integration of the associations will be achieved only when both groups are able to negotiate from a position of strength.

Moreover, the Special Committee is convinced that the formation of a black occupational caucus is a thoroughly legitimate proposal in terms of present association practice. For the education association, like other employee organizations, recognizes and makes provision for the divergent interests of its various member groups, at the same time operating on the assumption that the community of interests of all groups can best be served through unified organizational effort. For example, this assumption is operative for the special interests of vocational teachers, science teachers, rural and urban educators, and administrators. It is seldom operative for the special interests of black professionals. Perhaps this is because some association leaders are governed by a vision of the way things *ought* to be, instead of the way things are: Believing that race should not be a factor in professional decisions, they feel that racial distinctions should not, therefore, be recognized within associations. At this time, however, race clearly is a factor in

professional decisions; it is a major factor in our entire society. As long as this is so, the occupational needs and interests of black educators will continue to be *special*—urgently requiring the special attention of their associations. It is essential that education associations recognize this fact and respond to it; it is essential that black educators organize to ensure such recognition and response.

Within the state of Texas, the eastern region—where the problems of black educators are most severe—seems a logical place to begin to establish an occupational caucus. Most of the communities of East Texas are not so geographically isolated as to prohibit regional organization. In some of these communities, the Committee was informed, there has been some formation of ad hoc black teacher groups, who have come together to discuss and attempt to work out their mutual problems. Such groups as these could perhaps form the nucleus of a collective effort of black educators to identify their common interests and their primary goals, to determine an organized course of action, to establish dues, and to elect representatives through whom their group interests can be asserted within the merged associations. In this report, the Special Committee cannot realistically suggest a specific course of organized action; however, consultative services can be made available from NEA and from other groups possessing organizational skill and experience.

The Special Committee does not suggest that such an organizing effort can be successfully mounted and carried out without struggle or without hazard; but the Committee does suggest this: Unless the black educators do organize, they will remain powerless; unless they have faith in their ability to determine their own professional fate, that fate will be determined for them; the attrition of their ranks will continue; and the results will be as described by a black teacher in a major Southern city at a time when the ordeal of desegregation was just beginning:

> Our work as leaders is being ignored. No planning is made for what we have to offer. It is as if we are to be thrown to the winds. That will not help the Negro or the cause of integration. It will deprive him of his own people who can help him, and will encourage him to feel that his salvation only comes from others—from whites, from outside himself.[11]

ALLIANCE WITH LOCAL CITIZENS GROUPS

The discriminatory implementation of school desegregation programs in East Texas is a problem that East Texas educators share with their students and their communities. And yet, somehow, these problems are not shared. Perhaps this is because, traditionally, the black educators of East Texas and of the South have not been related as allies in the grass roots organizations of their communities. Their credentials as members of the thinly populated black middle class and as a part (however segregated) of the white-controlled public school institution have not endeared them to those black citizens who have neither middle-class professional status nor economic security. For their own part, black educators have felt

little personal need to involve themselves in political or civil rights activities; on the contrary, they have been made painfully aware that to participate in such activities would seriously jeopardize their professional employment. Obviously, there have been exceptions; this has been only the general pattern.

Moreover, many black educators remember their own struggle for education and position and believe that, at least in some measure, it has paid off. Therefore, they have tended to accept the white, middle-class ethic that hard work, thrift, and clean living lead both to heavenly grace and earthly profit. This is a concept that the impoverished black citizen finds exceedingly hard to swallow. Knowing that he, too, like his father before him has struggled, suffered, and worked hard at back-breaking labor, only to experience continuous defeat and the perpetual fate of being "last hired, first fired," he has no reason to value the rules of the white middle class—rules which he had no part in making and which have never worked for him.

Thus, the gap between the black educator and the majority of those who comprise the black community has been not only circumstantial; it has been to some extent cultural as well. It is now long past time for that gap to be closed. For as desegregation has proceeded in East Texas and in communities throughout the South, the position of black educators has been radically altered. No matter how closely they conform to the rules of the white establishment, no matter how silent they are in the face of injustice, black teachers and principals can no longer be assured of the security of professional status—or even of a steady job. They need the strength of the black community and its institutions as they have never needed it before. And the need is mutual. The educators and their communities share a common ground of interest. The loss of black educators, the preferential employment and assignment of white educators over black, the mistreatment of black students, and, overall, the loss of control over an important black institution—the black school—are all matters of common professional and community concern. Each group can augment the strength of the other in negotiating with school officials for change.

Both teachers and parents within their communities must organize if they are ever to exercise the countervailing power necessary to make the public school institution responsive to, responsible to, and relevant to the educational needs of black children and to the professional needs of black educators. This is essential if blacks are ever to begin the process of exercising their proportionate share of control over the public schools. Black educators should participate in this organizing effort not as individuals, but as occupational groups, thus contributing the full resources of their professional organization to the organization of their community.

Testimony to the NEA Special Committee indicated that there is now very little political and civil rights organization within the communities of East Texas. In one East Texas town, the Special Committee met with seven parents who told of their efforts to improve the educational opportunities available to their children. The Committee asked what organized support they had in their effort. One father

answered, "You're looking at us." His response was typical of statements heard by the Committee members throughout their interviews with East Texas citizens. This lack of political and civil rights organization is unique, even for such a traditionally fragmented minority group as the blacks. It is a lack that must be corrected if there is to be any possibility of correcting the racial injustices by which black teachers, students, and lay citizens are being victimized within the public school institution and in every aspect of community life.

As with the educators, members of the black community can only achieve bargaining power with the white establishment through the strength of their own politically cohesive organization. As with the educators, unless the members of the black community are organized, there is no way that they can be assured of legitimate representation of their group interests. There can be no doubt that the school and governing establishments of these East Texas communities will consider with new respect the interests of black citizens when those interests are asserted in a single voice by a united, cohesive educator–community organization that is able to demonstrate the strength of its support and the commitment of its supporters.

* * * *

The suggestions that have been made by this Special Committee are easily stated but, admittedly, difficult of execution. The blight of racial discrimination has infected this nation from its beginning; there are no quick and easy methods of cure. And the short history of school desegregation in the South has made it plainly evident that externally applied pressures—whether from the federal Executive or Judicial branch or from national organizations—will not alone alter the patterns of white resistance to social change. The pressures must come from the black community—from the parents, from the students, from the educators, and from existing black community institutions organized into a strong collective of aggrieved individuals exercising the initiative to influence the public school system to serve them properly. There will be no correction of existing educational, political, and economic inequalities until there is radical alteration of the balance of power within the communities of East Texas—and within communities throughout the nation.

NOTES

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NEA COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nicholas E. Duff, *Chairman*
Classroom Teacher
Excelsior, Minnesota

Helen E. Hay, *Vice-Chairman*
Classroom Teacher
Denver, Colorado

Hudson L. Barksdale
Second Vice-Chairman
Classroom Teacher
Spartanburg, South Carolina

Lucille Ball
Classroom Teacher
Little Rock, Arkansas

Lewis T. Clohan
Classroom Teacher
San Jose, California

George D. Fischer
President, NEA
Washington, D.C.

Lou Virginia Graves
Classroom Teacher
St. Petersburg, Florida

Muriel S. Kendrick
Classroom Teacher
Concord, New Hampshire

Clyde W. Kimball, Jr.
Principal
Atlanta, Georgia

Sam M. Lambert
Executive Secretary, NEA
Washington, D.C.

Edith Manfredi
Classroom Teacher
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Joseph Sullivan
Classroom Teacher
Romeo, Michigan

Dick Vander Woude
Associate Executive Director
Nevada State Education Association
Las Vegas, Nevada

Joseph Wilson Westbrook
Supervisor of Secondary Instruction
Memphis, Tennessee

Donald L. Conrad
Executive Secretary

Martha L. Ware
Associate Executive Secretary

William P. Haubner
Senior Staff Associate

Barry Kinnaird
Information Specialist

Dorothy C. Massie
Assistant Secretary for Field Studies

Donald H. Morrow
Associate Secretary for Ethics

Paul E. Putnam
Associate Secretary for Special Studies

Dale A. Robinson
Associate Secretary for Field Studies

Norma W. Plater
Administrative Associate

SAMUEL B. ETHRIDGE
Assistant Executive Secretary, NEA

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036